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# THE SHEFFIELD CONFERENCE

On another page will be found some treatment of the annual meeting of Delegates from the Affiliated Societies which was held in the Council Room of the Sheffield University on Saturday, December 26th. On the same evening a public meeting was held in the Firth Hall, under the chairmanship of the Lord Mayor of Sheffield, and a good audience listened to an address by Mr. St. John Ervine on "The Ruined Theatre."

Mr. Ervine based his remarks on the thesis that it was the general public that was to blame for any depreciation in contemporary theatrical art.

Mr. Ervine carried his argument back to Elizabethan days, and noted that the most popular plays then were tragedies. "You discover," he said, "that when people are strongest, happiest, best, they can stand up to tragedy proudly and without dismay." It was remarkable that the Irish, an oppressed and unhappy race, produced the great comic writers of the English tongue—Goldsmith, Sheridan, Synge, Shaw, and others. In England a point had been reached when the intellectual strain even of musical comedy was too severe, and people went to "the pictures," which left nothing to the imagination. The theatre audience had changed all over the world, and in Europe particularly. Money had changed hands; people had obtained the opportunity of culture without having the mentality for it. These newly-rich persons were found in most of the expensive seats in theatres, and the poor, intellectual persons in the gallery; and theatres, unhappily, could not live on gallery takings.

But an even more dangerous class than the new rich were the young people who had grown from 14 to 21 in the war years and the years of the war's consequences. Normally these would be supplying the spirituality, the adventure, the nobility without which a nation could not go forward. The fact was that, reared in violence and abnormality, they demanded these things in their plays. "The sloppy play which is merely sloppy does not attract them; but the sloppy play which is full of pistols and bombs gets them at once." The writings of the most popular author in this country at the moment were full of violence, cruelty,

vulgarity, distortion, ugliness, and neurasthenia.

The actor-manager had been blamed for these things in the past, but when he vanished he was found not to have been so bad. "What is wrong with the theatre at this moment," said Mr. Ervine, "is that we have not got an audience. There are plenty of good plays, plenty of good actors and actresses, good managers, people with the enterprise, spirit, and interest to do decent things. There will be no hope for drama in this country until we have cleared that audience out of the theatre." That was a task for the British Drama League, which should spend its time creating a new kind of playgoer or restoring the old kind. The state of the drama was only one symptom of a much wider disorder. All the spiritual fervour had been allowed to go out of English life. "The English people today are a collection of atheists, and not, as they say they are, a collection of Christians. I don't care what they call themselves, so long as they call themselves religious people, and believe what they say. . . . Where you have a healthy theatre, you see the people going in and letting free their spiritual emotions in a happy fashion. We have in our theatre neurosis, doubt, hatred, violence, nothing of love, charity, tolerance, and high faith. And the people get the kind of play they desire. The people in charge put on good things and you let them go. You want something that corresponds to the spiritual life of your time, and that spiritual life does not exist."

Mr. G. T. Hankin compared the freedom of dramatic opinion with that of literary opinion to the great advantage of the former, and looked to the free play of popular judgment to keep the theatre alive, even if the popular taste were not always impeccable.

Others speakers included Mr. Prentice, of the Sheffield Little Theatre, Mr. Furniss, of the Sheffield Thespian Society, Mr. Jackson, and Mr. Geoffrey Whitworth, who moved a hearty vote of thanks to the Sheffield Playgoers and to their Secretary, Miss Constance Radford, for their kind hospitality to the Delegates and for their help in organizing both the public and private meetings of the Conference.

# MR. SHAW'S "BACK TO METHUSELAH"

Reviewed by F. Sladen-Smith

MANY people with the spirit of adventure and romance within them inevitably feel a strange mixture of elation and misgiving on approaching the gateway to some famous labyrinth into whose intricate windings and twistings they are about to entrust themselves, with no other guide than the highly problematical spark of intelligence which it has pleased a good God to bestow on them. They may, of course, win through to the raised platform in the centre whence all may be surveyed with perfect calmness and the way out clearly discerned; or they may remain for hours ignominiously wandering up and down blind alleys, making hopeless side tracts, and eventually be hauled out by some professional guide who has been waiting for this humiliating moment.

Many of us must have felt the same sensation on opening "Back to Methuselah," and reading the dread inscription "A Metabiological Pentateuch." Here is a first class mental labyrinth, carefully prepared by a world-famous designer of intellectual subtleties, and few will be bold enough to declare triumphantly that they possess the key to it, while for those lost in it, what true and trusty guide is there save the designer himself, probably by this time immersed in the task of evolving fresh labyrinths!

Now the entrance to this particular labyrinth is a preface as interesting and convincing as any Mr. Shaw has ever given us, however controversial it may prove to those versed in Neo-Darwinism. The arguments have the delightful frankness and lucidity of a procession of figures on a Greek vase, page after page is sheer joy to read, while Part I, "In the Beginning," is a species of miracle play of such intensity and beauty that it will surely rank amongst the highest of Mr. Shaw's achievements. Adam, Eve, the Serpent, Cain, what parts to play—and what a play for the stage decorator and craftsman. With emotions profoundly stirred by language and invention of the deepest significance, one plunges into "The Gospel of the Brothers Barnabas"—and the fun begins!

The change from "In the Beginning" is sharp and sudden. Even the preface, despite sundry hints and warnings of what is

to follow, is scarcely a preparation for the extraordinary discussions and events of Parts II., III., IV. and V., "When a thing is funny," says the He-Ancient in Part V., "search it for a hidden truth." Certainly to judge by this particular dictum, hidden truths abound in the latter parts of the Pentateuch. Sometimes, as the book proceeds, it is only possible to echo the divine Alice and gasp "Curiouser and Curiouser!"

From the exceedingly trenchant satire of Joyce Burge and Lubin—delightful parts to play, by the way—in "The Gospel of the Brothers Barnabas," we get to "The Thing Happens," a deliciously amusing episode. Surely from the point of view of the theatre as we know it at present, with its obviously human limitations both as regards acting and audiences, these first three sections are the most actable; although here it is well to proceed cautiously, particularly with a book written quite as much for the audiences, actors and readers of future generations as for those of to-day. However that may be, the part of Confucius, the Chinaman, in "The Thing Happens," is one which any actor might well long to play, and the pictorial telephone arrangement, in which you see as well as hear the person addressed, would be most effective when presented on the stage.

Perhaps it may be argued that it is wrong to speak of a book so clearly literary (or so clearly for the stage of the future) in terms applicable to the present theatre, but if the literary qualities of the plays are obvious, so, equally obvious is the fact that they have been written by a consummate dramatist, and the opinion may be hazarded that all the big effects in the plays are of the stage, not of the library; and fully to appreciate them they must be seen on the stage. But if the development of modern drama has been slow, the development of modern audiences has been slower, and the "Tragedy of an Elderly Gentleman" which follows "The Thing Happens" should be an excellent test as to whether we have an audience capable of appreciating and understanding the lengthy conversations between the old man and the remarkable "flapper" called Zoe. It is possible these later sections of the book will be more relished when audiences have

reached the stage of development Strephon is mortified to discover in Chloe in Part V.

Probably not many actors would clamour for the arduous rôle of the Elderly Gentleman, but if his piteous searchings after truth might prove a trifle exhausting to the weak and frail actors and audiences of to-day, what are they likely to make of the extraordinary discussions of the group of youths, maidens and ancients in "As Far as Thoughts Can Reach"? Indeed, for many, it may require all the beauty and magic of the final speech of Lilith to restore some sort of order to the mental chaos produced by the extraordinary egg birth, the distressing spectacle of the Male and Female Automata, and the truly astonishing He-Ancient and She-Ancient with their longing for immortality, a longing which is curiously welcome, striking, as it does, almost the only familiar note in the whole of Part V. "As Far as Thought Can Reach," has certainly many of the qualities of a nightmare and for that reason, among others, and also because it brings the amazing book to its conclusion, is probably the part which will be most remembered; but for some of us—perhaps a symptom that we are still more or less in the elementary stage of the Male and Female Automata—the more humane, and, in a sense, more comprehensible beauties of "In the Beginning," will outweigh all the other sections.

As in all Mr. Shaw's works the ethical teaching is insistent; the little description of the method of learning to ride a bicycle, for instance, in the preface, is worth a thousand sermons on the value of perseverance. Although, doubtless owing to ignorance and convention, we may pray to be delivered from developing into anything resembling Zoo, Zozim, and the Oracle in Part IV., or the more monstrous Ancients of Part V., with their capabilities of producing a dozen eggs and several heads (to say nothing of the egg with its seventeen-year-old maiden inside, forsooth), few readers of the book will fail to be profoundly moved and inspired by the clean, fresh health of the ideas behind the fantasy. The more the extraordinary puppets chatter and dogmatize, the more, underneath all, is apparent a note of sustained optimism, of steady courage, and an insistence on the value of self-control that contrasts strangely with some of the philo-

sophies of the moment. Perhaps it is a little unsafe to say that never has Mr. Shaw been more religious than in writing this remarkable, and in some ways unbelievable Pentateuch, but it is perfectly safe to say that never has he written a more stimulating, entertaining and amazing book.

#### FROM THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN.

*We are indebted to the Editor of the MANCHESTER GUARDIAN for permission to reprint the following leading article which appeared in a recent issue of that journal. It is welcome evidence that our aim of giving publicity to the activities of various non-professional movements throughout the country is not failing of its purpose.*

While the greater part of the commercial theatre in England remains under the prolonged blight of revue, spectacle, and sentimentality, there is heartening evidence of a growing ferment of ideas and energy among the amateurs which any day may send up stout shoots into our common life. It may be winter in the Haymarket and the Strand, but it is spring in the suburbs and other places where keen young men and women get together to produce, set, act, and even write plays. One does not hear of cinema clubs cropping up like mushrooms in Tooting or Chorlton-cum-Hardy, but that useful little magazine DRAMA, in which the British Drama League keeps an eye on hopeful movements, big and little, and tries to link them up, has a cheerful tale to tell of amateurs from Lancashire to Surrey doing unusual and often ambitious plays. Now it is the Cotswold Players touring the villages of their area with a repertory that ranges from "Iphigenia in Tauris" to Mr. Brighouse's "Lonesome Like"; now the North London Group projecting a quadruple bill that includes Tolstoy's "Michael"; now our own Unnamed Society or the Lancashire Catholic Players engaged on some spirited creative adventure. The League has managed to join on a common programme of interchanging ideas over 140 groups, which include village players, long-established stage societies, and playgoers' clubs, and its conference at Sheffield should yield some useful pooling of plans and records of work done.





THE JOURNAL OF  
THE BRITISH DRAMA LEAGUE

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*Neither the Editor nor the Drama League as a whole accepts any responsibility for the opinions expressed in signed articles printed in this Journal*

WE have delayed this month's issue of DRAMA by a few days so as to give the following résumé of the meeting of Affiliated Societies which took place at Sheffield University on November 26th, in connection with the Provincial Autumn Conference. Mr. Geoffrey Whitworth occupied the chair and delegates were present from the following: West Leeds High School Dramatic Society, New Earswick, Collingham Players, Birmingham University Literary and Dramatic Society, Shirehampton and Avonmouth Dramatic Society, Bath Playgoers Society, Nottingham Little Movement, Civic Players, Exeter Drama League, Sheffield Repertory Company, Sheffield Thespian Dramatic Society, Stockport Garrick Society, Shakespeare Head Press, Sheffield Playgoers' Society, Chesterfield Settlement Dramatic Reading Club, Lancashire Catholic Players, Unnamed Society Manchester, Manchester Playgoers' Club, Bristol Folk House Players, Clifton Association Club, Bristol Playgoers, Harpendon Group, Ruby Ginmer School of Dancing.

The Chairman reported on the action that had been taken in regard to two resolutions

passed at the last Conference held in London in June relating to the proposal for a National Theatre and the question of Author's Royalties.

It would, he said, be no use demanding a National Theatre at the present moment, but the Council of the League were holding a watching brief for a National Theatre, and would be ready at any time to take action in the matter when it might seem possible.

After some discussion on the question of Author's Royalties the following resolution was agreed to:

*That the British Drama League approach leading dramatists and see how many agree with Mr. Bernard Shaw's point of view, and that the League draw up a draft Consideration to be submitted to affiliated Societies in order that those Societies may embody it in their rules and thus come within the scope of Mr. Shaw's resolution.*

Miss Radford moved the following resolution:

*That DRAMA be asked to put in its first issue for the New Year a full list of affiliated Societies, and to add the additions from time to time.*

Mr. Milnes seconded the resolution which was carried unanimously.

The Conference next discussed the Stratford Head Press Play Circulation Scheme, and a suggested basis was submitted.

Mr. Doran moved the following resolution:

*That this scheme be given a trial, and if the response does not result in 800 subscriptions being received, the Council be asked to enquire as to the possibility of publishing plays as an appendix to DRAMA.*

It was proposed as an amendment that the scheme be adopted with the recommendation that the Committee selecting the plays should only select those authors who would be prepared to accept a percentage of gross takings.

The amendment was carried by 14 votes to 7.

On the question of assistance being given to provincial touring companies, Mr. Milnes moved the following resolution:

*That the secretary enquire from the Actors' Association whether it would be of any value for the League to offer to assist stranded members of provincial touring companies. If so, the matter to be brought up at another meeting or published in DRAMA.*

Miss G. Willoughby seconded, and the resolution was carried by 13 votes to 2.

(Continued on page 6.)

# THE UNIVERSITY & THE STAGE

Mr. Athole Stewart replies to Mr. Gilbert Hall

SIR,—I beg to protest emphatically against the insulting and derogatory remarks upon the mentality of actors which Mr. Gilbert Hall has thought fit to make in his letter on "The University and the Stage," which appears in the current issue of DRAMA.

It has always been my fixed impression that the chief policy of the British Drama League was to maintain good relations between all those who are interested in the drama; that I take to be the pervading spirit of any League—the linking up of various sections of the community who may have a common aim and object. It is singularly unfortunate, therefore, that such mendacious statements about the actor should be made in the official organ of the British Drama League.

Apart from their utter lack of truth they are not calculated to foster a spirit of friendship towards the League amongst the members of the profession to which I am very proud to belong.

By what right does Mr. Gilbert Hall maintain that, "It is hard for anyone with experience of the profession to deny that the average actor is the most narrow-minded person on earth, whose one subject of interest and conversation outside the theatre is company scandal and gossip"? Because, he naively tells us, he has heard it from an actor friend of his who feels this bitter truth so deeply that, to quote him again, "it is an eternal burden to his life's song"! Comment on such balderdash is superfluous.

Further we are led to believe that this precious opinion *must* be true because his friend is "that most strange article," a literary man as well as an actor. It is, indeed, a case of "save me from my friends"!

How much does Mr. Gilbert Hall really know about the people he maligns so cruelly? He signs himself as President of a Dramatic Society, but this elevated position hardly entitles him to cast aspersions on the intellectual faculty of the professional artist.

Is he, or was he a professional actor, or in any way connected with the stage? Has he spent his whole life in its environments, meeting the thousands engaged in the theatres day after day, night after night,

outside *and* inside the theatre? If he has not then he has no sort of right to rush into print and vilify the characters of a hard working body of artists who most certainly do *not*, so far as my experience of over twenty years allows me to judge, indulge in "company gossip and scandal." If they talk "shop" it is because they are interested in their art. They are not peculiar in this respect; the artist is invariably ready to discuss his work and the public is just as invariably eager for him to do so.

But I find nothing to persuade me that Mr. Gilbert Hall has had any such experience as I mention; he would seem to me to be the type of person who, having collected together a few theoretical notions, is never so happy as when thrusting them forward. Adverse criticism is his only joy; everything about the stage is damnable as it exists and must be reformed altogether according to *his* lights.

In the light of my own intimate experience of the stage, I am ready to back my opinion to any extent against Mr. Gilbert Hall's, that far from the actor being the illiterate, narrow-minded individual the readers of DRAMA are asked to believe, his education, outlook on life, his pursuits and hobbies are as catholic as those of the members of any other profession. That being so I would record my keen resentment at the deliberate insult which Mr. Gilbert Hall has thrown at the theatrical profession.

What Mr. Gilbert Hall thinks is of very little consequence, but his sneers cannot be allowed to pass unnoticed, for the obvious reason that they have appeared in a journal which is read by a great number of keen followers of the theatre. It is in order that they may be refuted that I ask you, in fairness, to give equal prominence to this letter. It is regrettable that no comment can be made for a whole month, but, by that time Mr. Gilbert Hall may make a suitable apology and withdraw his assertions which in the first place should never have been made.

But I have not finished with Mr. Gilbert Hall and his colossal ignorance of theatrical affairs. He not only considers the actor to be a thing of mental threads and patches, but he seeks to settle the training of the

embryo actor. He has been examining the course of education for the stage which is provided at "these Schools of Dramatic Art," and—with sorrow be it said—he considers it sadly lacking. He finds the classes held at the above deal with "rehearsals, physical training, dancing, gesture, fencing, voice training and elocution," but, would you believe it, this is all wrong as a stage training according to Mr. Gilbert Hall! He says "there is absolutely nothing to be gained in the way of general education. There is nothing here to instil a love of good drama into the students, or to teach them what is a good play and what is not."

Let me ask Mr. Gilbert Hall for what earthly purpose the students attend these academies if it is not to learn the rudiments, the technique of acting through the medium of the classes he condemns? Does he for one moment suppose that a theatrical manager is going to engage a student because he happens to know his Restoration Dramatists, his Racine and his Molière, his Ibsen and his Strindberg. I do beg that Mr. Gilbert Hall will show us signs of his own intellectual capacity since he denies it in the actor.

But, primarily, it is the actor's business to act not to criticise. Many of us on the stage would go short of the necessities of life were we to refuse to take engagements in plays that did not appeal to our critical faculties—if Mr. Gilbert Hall will allow us any.

I do not for one moment wish to minimise the value of a knowledge of dramatic literature; that is a very real asset to an actor, but a knowledge of acting must be the first essential for anyone taking up the stage as a profession.

Mr. Gilbert Hall desires "a fair amount of wide general work in English, History, etc.," to be included in the training for the stage.

Surely all this is presumed to be acquired before actually taking up a special vocational training? A medical student does not walk the hospitals to learn anything else except how to become an efficient physician or surgeon. Why should a dramatic student do more than concentrate on the art of acting? Heaven knows there is enough to occupy his time as Mr. Gilbert Hall would know if he realised how hard the students

work at the Central School of Speech Training and Dramatic Art. Why should they go through the ordinary curriculum of a school all over again! Do let us have things in their proper place.

Mr. Gilbert Hall appears obsessed by the idea that a degree in dramatic art to be conferred by any of the Universities is to be the "key to the profession." I can tell him this much that such a diploma will not be worth the paper it is printed on in the eyes of a theatrical manager.

Such a suggestion is preposterous. Who is going to recognise the judgment of University authorities far removed from the environments of the theatre and out of touch with its conditions?

By all means let there be a chair for Dramatic Literature and Degrees bestowed for knowledge of this subject; but to suggest "the constitution of a diploma in stage work at the University" shows Mr. Gilbert Hall to be as ignorant of dramatic art as he is of its exponents.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,  
ATHOLE STEWART.

Garrick Club, 12th Nov., 1921.

## THE AUTUMN CONFERENCE.

*Continued from page 4.*

Mr. P. Napier Miles moved the following resolution:

*That help from the Central body should be given to the smaller Societies by supplying assistance at a reduced rate for the production of plays in return for which the proceeds of at least one public performance be given to the headquarters of the Drama League by the Society helped.*

After some discussion Mr. Miles agreed to add to this resolution the following words:

*And that they ask the Societies if they will co-operate in some such scheme.*

Mr. Doran seconded, and the resolution was carried unanimously.

Mr. Hayes gave an invitation on behalf of the Stockport Garrick Society that the next Autumn Conference should be held at ~~Sheffield~~ **Stockport**.

On the motion of Mr. Prentice, seconded by Mr. Miles, it was agreed that the Council of the League should be asked to accept this invitation on behalf of the Conference.

A vote of thanks was accorded the Vice-Chancellor of the University for the use of the Council room.



# NEWS FROM NORTH & SOUTH

## THE STOCKPORT GARRICK.

This Society has just celebrated its twenty-first birthday, and from the pages of that excellent periodical, "The Garrick Magazine," we venture to extract the following paragraphs dealing with the history and proud position of the society:

On October 16th, 1901, a circular was addressed to many people in Stockport asking them to attend a meeting in the Church Coffee Tavern in order to consider the desirability of forming a new Stockport Dramatic and Literary Society. The circular was issued by Mr. Edwin T. Heys, and the following names appear as conveners of the meeting, viz.: Harold Aldred, William Barber, Walter Chadwick, Burley Copley, George L. Halsall, Henry B. Johnson, William Miller, Eric J. Moorhouse, Paul Moorhouse, Fred Pennington, George Perkin, Frank Robinson, Robert J. Smith, Fred Smith, William Turner, George Victor Wright.

The outcome of this meeting was the formation on October 24th of the Stockport Garrick Society.

The first public performance of the society was "The Merchant of Venice," which was produced under the direction of Ryder Boys at the Mechanics' Institute for three nights.

The performance had to be repeated on the following Monday. Literary meetings appear to have been popular; we are glad to see signs of revival in this direction to-day. It is only natural in those days before motors (or shall we say golf?) came into prominence, that the cycling section was decidedly vigorous. We have not been able to discover why the Orchestral and the Choral Sections were abandoned. We find that rehearsals were held weekly.

On January 13th, 1903, the society moved from its temporary home to the Albert Hall, and two years afterwards the late Headquarters at Wellington Street were secured. The question of accommodation has always been a vexed one, and as the present members are well aware, it was felt that the only means of obtaining suitable quarters was to form a company to raise the necessary money. This has been done. The new company, Stockport Garrick, Limited, bought the buildings on Wellington Road. Ninety-five per cent. of the shareholders are

Garrick members, and the society has a good and growing interest in the shares.

The society has been the forerunner of many others, whose work and aims are closely modelled on those of the Garrick. It is, indeed, hard to realise the far-spread influence of the society. In most places in the world, wherever good theatrical work is done, we find that if the leader is not an old Garrick member, there is some influence from or association with the parent organisation at Stockport.

## VILLAGE DRAMA SOCIETY.

(From the Western Morning News.)

If we may take any criterion from the recent demonstration in King's Hall, Exeter, village drama has well justified its claim on public attention. It is true that Exeter saw village drama at its best. The Kelly Dramatic Society is one of the pioneers of village drama. Formed from the three parishes of Kelly, Bradstone, and Dunterton (whose united population is not 300), it has from this obscure corner of Devon been a powerful force in cultivating and beautifying the soul of village life. It was expected that the Kelly Society would set a high standard, but it was a severe test they imposed upon themselves, and the Exeter audience acknowledged that they acquitted themselves with a force and genius that augurs well for the movement.

Whilst pledging themselves to one religious drama every year, the Kelly Society have this year produced five other plays, three of which were presented at Exeter. It is in a sense missionary work they are doing. As the case was put by one of their leaders:—"We do not tie ourselves to anything, and we do not try to tickle the public taste. We do not fear our audiences, nor follow blindly in their lead, but we try to help them to follow us in our interpretation of the best style of play of which we feel ourselves capable."

In other words, it is the genius of rural England undiluted, untarnished, and innocent that the village drama society is ambitious to present. It need only be added, so far as Kelly is concerned, that the players live in scattered farms and cottages, that some of them come three miles to rehearsal, and that they spare no pains to make them perfect. The result is an interpretation

which may not follow all the canons of dramatic technique, but which does present the story as it is realised by the mind of the village player.

Three plays were chosen for the demonstration—"Where Love Is," dramatized from Tolstoi's story by A. M. P. Dawson, "The Old Miser," a bright little comedy by E. and C. Derwent, and the late Lady Darwin's "Green Broom."

In a frank and modest speech before the rise of the first curtain Miss Kelly introduced the actors. "We are not here," she said, "with any idea of showing off, or of proving that we are better than anybody else, but we are here at the invitation of the village institutes to show what any little village can do if it tries. We are about as small a village as you can find, and we have 23 actors here to-day. We have rehearsed in an old barn. We are used to it, and once, when our actors were asked to come to Exeter, they refused, because they said they did not like to leave their old surroundings. So I ask you in your imagination to put us back in the old barn, with cobwebbed rafters, and holes in the floor, and no scenery but of our own making. Those are our proper surroundings. We want to tell you our story as we understand it, and leave the rest to your imagination. But what I do want to say is that what we can do you can do, and as we have a country audience here I want to appeal to you all to try and do something of the kind."

If we might make a suggestion, we hope that Miss Kelly and her players will be invited to give a demonstration in Plymouth, where the characteristics of village drama would arouse perhaps more interest even than in the county town.

#### THE SALI LOBEL SCHOOL.

Dancing, and the interpretation, through physical movement, of musical and dramatic subjects are in these days receiving ever-increasing attention from cultured people. Right back through the centuries—long before any of the other arts could stand alone—dancing was man's expression of moods that were too subtle for any other method of presentation. In our times rhythmical movement, at its best, combines the subtlety of old ideas with the enlarged technique of

the new ones, and as an art by itself—as in ballets and other established forms—or in the free accompaniment of music and poetry, dancing thus becomes one of the most fascinating means of self-expression.

Miss Sali Löbel is a Roumanian artist who has made a special study of these varied aspects of her subject, and a glance at the prospectus shows the comprehensive nature of her work. Miss Löbel is equally well known as an elocutionist, and at her school at 244, Deansgate, Manchester, she teaches voice production for public speakers, and in dramatic styles.

"The Sali Löbel Ballet" and a company that will endeavour to develop interest in chamber drama are special features of a very full scheme. Another notable point is the course of tuition for children. Dancing, even in its ordinary forms, is no longer a stereotyped thing, and it is good to note that in Miss Löbel's method children are taught to use their minds in thinking out for themselves new ideas and movements. The fact that students are encouraged to form parties to visit concerts and picture galleries, as well as theatres, is significant of the earnestness of the training.

G. A. H.

#### SACRED DANCE AND DRAMA.

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